REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 8-17 and 20-22.

The above amendment is responsive to points set forth in the Official Action.

Above-amended main claim 8 incorporates the features of claims 18 and 19 in claim 8 and further places the claim in "consists essentially of" format, with the resinous component (A) being in "consisting of" format.

The significance of this amendment will become further apparent from the remarks below.

Claims 8-13 and 17-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takemura et al. (U.S. 5,759,739) in view of Yoshimoto et al. (EP 0 540 032 A1) and Suwa et al. (U.S. 6,187,504 B1).

Further, claims 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takemura et al. (U.S. 5,759,739) in view of Yoshimoto et al. (EP 0 540 032 A1) and Suwa et al. (U.S. 6,187,504 B1) as applied to claim 12 above, and further in view of Applicants' admitted prior art (p. 3 of present specification).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As apparent from the paragraph bridging columns 1 and 2 of the Takemura reference, the resist composition thereof is basically a three-component system comprising (A) a photoacid generator, (B) an alkali-soluble resin and (C) a dissolution inhibitor including two kinds of different resinous ingredients (B) and (C), of which (C) serves to reduce the alkali-solubility of (B) as being formulated in a minor or limited amount. On the other hand, the photoresist composition claimed in present claim 8 contains a single type of resinous ingredient as the film-forming base resin.

Also note the "consisting essentially of" terminology of the present claims, which excludes employing both a film-forming resinous compound and a dissolution inhibitor as in the case of Takemura, and the "consisting of" terminology for the resin component (A) which requires a single type of resin as defined in claim 8.

Moreover, even though Takemura's general formula (2) for dissolution inhibitor may generically encompass component (A) of the present invention, those skilled in the art of photoresist compositions and informed of the Takemura reference would not be motivated to replace the dissolution inhibitor of Takemura with the base resin of the component (A) herein, in the formulation of a photoresist composition unless they attempted to reconstruct the present invention by relying on the Applicants' disclosure. This is due to the fact that a dissolution inhibitor and a base resin work in very different ways as an ingredient in photoresist compositions.

In view of this clear difference in the components between Takemura and the present invention, it is apparent that the present claims are unobvious over Takemura even in combination with the secondary references, especially now that the resin (A) in claim 8 is amended relative to the molar fractions of the respective monomeric units.

In this regard, it is not apparent why one of ordinary skill in the art would modify Takemura, as discussed above, to discard its film-forming resin component (B) or perhaps dissolution inhibitor component (C) and include the phosphorous-containing oxoacid of Yoshimoto and further include the Lewis base of Suwa, apart from an improper hindsight reconstruction of the present claims.

Similar comments apply with regard to the rejection of claims 14-16 over the above applied art and further in view of the "admitted prior art" of the present specification.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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